

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on November 21, 2013.

Members Present:

Nancy Aposhian
Dilworth Brinton, Jr.
Melissa Johnson
Dr. Robbi D. Venditti
Peggy Wilson
Alyssa Yingling

Members Absent:

David Dean
Merlin Ellis
Robert Valverde
Karina Wilhelm

Staff Present:

Cindy Ornstein
Sunnee O'Rork
Kathy Eastman
Rob Schultz
Jean Kaminski

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, Chair, asked for any corrections or discussion regarding the minutes of September 26, 2013. There being none, Alyssa Yingling made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Dilworth Brinton, Jr. seconded, and the Board members present unanimously approved the September 26 minutes. They will be posted on the City's web page.

Public Comments: No members of the public were present.

Information – Hear Information on Creative Economy Fund and Founding Resident Companies – Cindy Ornstein

At the September meeting, Peggy Wilson had questions regarding the Creative Economy Fund, but Cindy Ornstein was unable to attend the meeting and respond to her questions. Ms. Ornstein prepared a document answering the questions asked and shared them with the Board. First, she shared the document created for Founding Resident Companies outlining the benefits they receive - see Exhibit A. Second, she shared the document she prepared to answer the questions – see Exhibit B.

Ms. Ornstein wanted the Board to understand that established discounts for the Founding Resident Companies and the Creative Economy Fund are two separate things. The Creative Economy Fund was not established to solely benefit the Founding Resident Companies (although they were invited to apply if they choose), but to lend support to arts organizations through tough times, provide new opportunities for Mesa audiences, and increase activity in downtown Mesa. The Fund was established after the Mesa Arts and Culture Grants and the Arts and Cultural Mini-Grants were eliminated as part of the City's budget reductions. As there was no money for grants, Ms. Ornstein was asked to think creatively of a way to support arts and culture organizations in Mesa in lieu of cash awards. She presented the idea of a Creative Economy Fund (an in-kind award to arts organizations who present at (MAC) Mesa Arts Center) to Council, and they agreed to support the Fund. In turn, the City reduced the amount of the fund (\$25,000 total) from Mesa Arts Center's target revenue goal for rentals.

Ms. Ornstein shared some statistics she had from Creative Economy Fund activity, pointing out the organizations that had never presented at Mesa Arts Center, or who were not able to return to Mesa Arts Center because they could not afford the rental fees. Each year there were at least two new organizations that brought in new and diverse audiences along with new experiences for Mesa citizens that included workshops, talkbacks with the actors, school packets, free tickets to disadvantaged families, etc.

Each year, Mesa Arts Center has seen a growing number of applicants, and this year we saw more applications again, and quite a few scored high marks. This year, the total money requested was \$43,993. Rather than only give 100% to a few organizations and much less to the next highest ranking organizations, it was decided that no one organization would receive 100% of their request. Several of the top applicants received 90% allowing the fund to support a larger number of the applicants.

Discussion – Consider Writing a Letter to Council to Increase Money Awarded to Creative Economy Fund and/or Consider Bringing Back Grant Funding – Peggy Wilson

Based on the information shared, and because each year we see a growing number of applicants, the Board agreed it would be worth their while to make Council aware of a growing need and ask them to entertain the idea of increasing the funds the City provides to the Creative Economy Fund (with the understanding that the amount allotted would be the same amount deducted from the expected revenue for Mesa Arts Center rentals). Peggy Wilson will draft a letter to Council for the January meeting. The Board will discuss the contents of the letter and the chair will sign the letter, if all are in agreement.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY) – Sunnee O’Rork

- “Art Speaks: A Way with Words” opened October 4 with 115 in attendance. The exhibition is doing well.
- The Museum hosted a press event on October 16 to announce the anonymous \$100,000 donor, John Whiteman, celebrate the City’s match of \$100,000, and challenge the public to match it for another \$100,000. The Museum has already received a pledge of \$25,000 toward the public match.
- AMY hosted a Family Fun Day on October 26 with several hundred attending. ASU came with a “Bad and Ugly Bug” exhibition. This enticed AMY to revive the former “Jeepers Creepers” exhibition next year.
- AMY hosted a Teacher’s Preview Event and a Volunteer Appreciation event.
- A successful Groupon Campaign was executed to increase membership and attendance. The Museum has almost reached its 2014 goal with 1,650 memberships. As of several weeks ago, 1,119 Groupon admissions were sold with 300 already redeemed.
- Association of Children’s Museums will hold their annual conference in Phoenix this coming May. The Museum, along with the Phoenix Children’s Museum, will co-host a reception at AMY during the conference. Arizona Museum of Natural History will also be a part of that evening.
- Sunnee O’Rork was asked to be at the table for the Reimagining Children’s Museums Summit at the Boston Society of Architects for the Association of Children’s Museums.
- AMY is celebrating their 35th birthday on December 6 from 6 – 8 p.m.
- The Museum will close on January 6 to prepare for the grand opening as the i.d.e.a. Museum on February 6.

Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) – Kathy Eastman for Tom Wilson

- Kathy Eastman had a meeting to review a grant that she is collaborating on with ASU. AzMNH would be used as a beta test site. Part of the grant is for an app for science museums for gallery interpretation.
- Ms. Eastman is working on a Teacher Education Grant for virtual field trips. She noted that neither of these grants brings hard cash to the Museum, but it does bring excellent collaboration and interaction opportunities.
- AzMNH had a Groupon in September to help during their slowest admission month, and had an excellent response.
- The Museum held their gallery interrupter training in October and had a Night with the Stars (collaboration with ASU, MCC, and East Valley Astronomy Club). As a result of Night with the Stars, Ms. Eastman is working with a patron who is making a donation of a \$5,000 telescope for the Museum.
- In October, s Storytelling event, National Archeology Day, and school group visits were presented at Mesa Grande.
- On December 21, Mesa Grande will hold a Winter Solstice event with a Hohokam expert who will speak about their calendaring system and calendaring systems in general.
- On December 7, the Museum will hold Geology Day.
- Cretaceous Seas exhibition will open on December 6.
- The Museum has completed the hiring process for an Associate Curator at Mesa Grande. Emily Gobel has a Doctorate from Yale, and has worked at the Smithsonian. She will be an outstanding addition to the Museum staff.

Cindy Ornstein, Arts and Culture Director, added that Dr. Tom Wilson applied for a grant with the Mead Foundation asking for \$36,000, but showed the need for \$50,000. In return, the Mead Foundation awarded the Museum the full \$50,000 for a robotic dinosaur project. She added that Dr. Wilson was appointed by Governor Brewer to the State Archeology Commission.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- Response to the Artspace survey for the marketing phase looks positive; 714 artists responded with 278 indicating that they would consider moving to a live/work space in Mesa. 80 creative businesses responded as well, with 42 indicating they would consider a move. Artspace considered those numbers to be strong survey results. MAC expects a final report from Artspace in February.
- The InFlux program, where temporary pieces of art are installed in vacant store fronts and other spaces in cities throughout the Valley, will again have a project here at MAC. The artist this year is Hilary Harp, a professor of sculpture at ASU, and her partner Barry Moon, also at ASU. Their work will be installed in the Ikeda lobby area. Dana Park is also participating this year and will have two pieces in their spaces.
- The Mesa Arts Festival on December 14 and 15, from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., has 42 artists displaying their work with the usual festival activities – food/beverage, children’s activities, and live entertainment. The Store (with 60 artists) and Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) will be open on both days of the festival.
- Day of the Dead Festival in October had 17,000 guests as compared to 14,000 last year. MAC partnered again with the Consul General of Mexico in Phoenix. Being new to Phoenix this year, the Consul General was an active partner welcoming guests and talking with the general public.

Director’s Report – Cindy Ornstein

Ticket sales are at almost \$1.5M and doing well; the budgeted goal is \$1.7M for this fiscal year.

Boston Pops had approximately 17,200 attending. The City did like the event at Hohokam and would like to see more. MAC partnered with the Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities Department for Boston Pops.

Staff is working to finalize a collaborative package of activities in Mesa for the Sci-Tech Festival. This would include events that involve innovation, creativity, science, and technology.

Thank you to Peggy Wilson and Dilworth Brinton, Jr. for attending one of five Brainstorming meetings for the ArtPlace project last week. A lot of common themes surfaced – especially a desire for a social environment/gathering space. An RFQ for an artist to do a shade sculpture on the North Plaze will go out soon. Staff is planning a series of community meetings and Ms. Ornstein invited the Board members to attend those meetings as well.

Ms. Ornstein, Patty Haberman, MCA Curator, and Mandy Buscas, Outreach Education Program Coordinator, recently returned from a conference on interactive art in Minneapolis, MN. They realized that there are a lot of different ways that people are making work that is interactive. Ms. Ornstein also learned there are a lot of considerations on how you create a space like we are planning with the Artplace project and how to make it successful.

Ms. Ornstein shared that she was named a Piper Fellow. She applied to travel to visit four cities, key institutions and Arts and Culture Departments to look at best practices for sustaining community engagement and community support for arts organizations over a long period of time. She wants to look at what happened in the cultural ecosystem to support organizations that were successful and what happened within each institution that allowed a culture that sustained deep community ownership. She will travel to Chicago, Minneapolis, San Francisco, and Seattle.

Dilworth Brinton, Jr. mentioned that 46 Hohokams volunteered to help with parking cars for the Boston Pops concert. He said the group thoroughly enjoyed helping out with the event and would love to help again in the future.

Identify Items for Future Agendas - Board

Review, discuss and approve the drafted letter to Council.

Report on Conferences and/or Meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only

Dr. Robbie D. Venditti, Chair, reminded the Board of an e-mail that was forwarded for the Governor's Arts Award nominations, in case the Board or any individual was interested in nominating someone or an organization.

Dr. Venditti, Chair: attended Mesa Contemporary Arts annual 10 x 10 event, one of her favorite events. She also attended the opening of "Art Speaks a Way with Words" at AMY and she and her guests found the exhibition "fabulous." She also attended Under the Streetlamp at MAC.

Nancy Aposhian: She walked in the Veteran's Day Parade and attended the Asian Festival on MAC campus that day. She attended the opening of "Art Speaks a Way with Words," as well.

Alyssa Yingling: She attended the opening of "Art Speaks a Way with Words," and enjoyed the variety of cultures there.

Melissa Sue Johnson: She too attended the opening of "Art Speaks a Way with Words." She took the activities she did at the opening and put them up on the board in her classroom. When her students arrived the next day they were so impressed. As the following Sunday was a Target 3 for Free Sunday, she was able to give them the information on the free Sunday and encouraged them to take their families. She attended the National Geology Day at Mesa Grande with her son and walked through the Hohokam ruins – they both really enjoyed it.

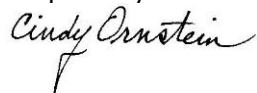
Peggy Wilson: Attended one of the Artplace brainstorming sessions and found it interesting. She attended one of Southwest Shakespeare's performances of "Two Gentlemen of Verona."

Dilworth Brinton, Jr.: Attended the Boston Pops concert at Hohokam Stadium.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting date is January 23, 2014, 4 p.m. and will be at Mesa Contemporary Arts.

Respectfully submitted,



Cindy Ornstein, Director
Arts and Culture Department

Exhibit A

Mesa Arts Center Founding Resident Companies Program

Mission:

To provide and assist Founding Resident Companies with the opportunity to create, present, and deliver outstanding visual and performing arts programming that is diverse, accessible, and stimulates the local economy.

Program:

Mesa Arts Center offers unique rental benefits and privileges to Founding Resident Companies.

Founding Resident Companies will be offered the best rates available when booking venues at Mesa Arts Center.

Founding Resident Companies will be offered the benefit to secure dates at Mesa Arts Center before the calendar is available to the general public.

Additional Founding Resident Companies Benefits offered for the 2013-14 Season:

- A sliding scale rental discount applied to the rent based on current fiscal year venue usage (instituted 08-09)
- A \$15,000.00 In-kind rental credit split-allocated between Resident Companies based on previous fiscal year venue usage (instituted 09-10)
- Opportunity to apply for additional rental credit through the Creative Economy Fund (instituted 2010-11)
- Front-of House staff included in rental fee
- Basic Box Office services included in rental fee
- One (1) Stage Tech included in rental fee (up to 8 hrs/daily or up to 40hrs/weekly)
- Fees waived on in-house equipment
- Fees waived on reception space (day of event)
- Discounted credit card fees (2.8%)
- Discounted restoration fees on non-ticketed events
- Commission fee waived on merchandise sales
- Rental deposit requirement waived
- Inclusion on Mesa Arts Center website which includes static background information with link to affiliate website
- Inclusion in the MAC bi-monthly e-newsletter:
 - If resident company has an event applicable to that month, and provides an incentive, or exclusive discount for the event
- Inclusion in *At the MAC*, the monthly press release sent to media outlining all the upcoming month's events if the resident company has an event applicable to that month
- Inclusion on collateral material promoting Mesa Arts Center events that involve resident company activity (programs, press releases, etc)
- Inclusion on both Electronic Marquees

Due to time restrictions we take all information from Founding Resident Company's website. If information on the site is not accurate, we cannot be responsible for errors or omissions.

Recognized Founding Resident Companies for 2013-14:

- Ballet Etudes
- East Valley Children's Theatre
- Mesa Encore Theatre
- Metropolitan Youth Symphony
- Sonoran Desert Chorale
- Southwest Shakespeare Company
- Symphony of the Southwest

Maintaining Eligibility Criteria:

- Organization is recognized as tax exempt under Section 501(c)-(3) of the Internal Revenue Service.
- Organization based in Mesa and has a three-year history of public performances in Mesa.

Restrictions:

- Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, gender, sexual preference or national origin will be subject to termination of Founding Resident-Affiliate status.
- Organizations that are unable to comply with Mesa Arts Center's license agreement terms or are unable to follow the policies and procedures of Mesa Arts Center will be subject to termination of Founding Resident-Affiliate status.

*See Founding Resident Company 2013-14 Theater Rental Rates for detailed information.
Rates/terms may be subject to annual review and approval by City Council.*

Exhibit B

PERFORMING LIVE | MESA CONTEMPORARY ARTS | ART STUDIOS

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: November 21, 2013

To: Museum and Cultural Advisory Board

From: Cindy Ornstein, Executive Director

Re: Responses/Information in Response to Creative Economy Fund Document from Peggy Wilson

-- Statements or Questions about Founding Resident Company Needs in Peggy Wilson's Document:

- States that the special fund created in 2009-10 to assist Founding Resident Companies (FRC's) was reduced from \$15,000 to \$10,000 when the Creative Economy Fund (CEF) was created. This is not accurate. The special \$15,000 fund available for FRC's, distributed based on prior year percentage of theater usage, was NOT reduced to \$10,000 when CEF was created—it remained and still is \$15,000.
- Notes that no FRC received 100% of their CEF request. It is true that no FRC received 100% of their CEF request in 2013—with more proposals than before and many scoring well, the top score range received 90% of their request so the money could be more widely distributed and benefit all those applicants that received high scores with a meaningful award.
- States that Southwest Shakespeare and others are financially strained. We recognize that non-profit arts organizations have a need for funding, but that is true for all applicants, not just FRC's, and the distribution of funds has to be done in a fair manner based on panel scoring.
- Asks what the rationale was for creating the special \$15,000 fund for the FRC's. The original \$15,000 fund for FRC's was instituted during the recession to provide additional relief for the FRC's. It was a fund that could be used either for marketing purposes or rent reduction, but all FRC's chose rent reduction, so it now goes specifically for that. This was done prior to the creation of the CEF.

- The rationale of providing assistance to arts organizations who want to do business in Mesa (not JUST the FRC's) was a primary reason for the CEF program—a way to give in-kind support as we were not in a position to reinstitute the cash grant award program. Other goals were to bring new companies to the Center and encourage additional activities that would build and engage audiences to help the organizations become stronger and more sustainable.

--Questions regarding Criteria for Recommending Increased Funding:

- Are needs met with the current funding? Clearly, arts organizations still do struggle financially, and all their needs are not being met, although it is not feasible for the City's Arts and Culture Department to meet all the needs of every organization, including our FRC's. As evidenced by the attached document showing the many benefits FRC's receive, we do provide many benefits and services to help them be more sustainable.
- Are goals met with the current funding? The current funding for Creative Economy Fund is very helpful to the companies, and several have told us that they could not do programming at MAC without it. However, since we could not afford to give the top scoring proposals 100% of their request, and the percentage went down from there, there is clearly unmet need. That said, I believe we made a generous award to all the applicants that scored very well in the panel process.

Facts demonstrating program's success:

- How many new performances/events per year?

Note: We are defining as "new" those performances that are by either brand new clients of MAC or clients returning after a long absence as a result of the CEF Program.

Year	# of Grants Awarded	# of New Performances*
2011-12	12	2
2012-13	12	4
2013-14	13	4

- How has community been engaged?

Engagements have varied tremendously, from pre-show performances in the lobby, to pre- and post-show artist talks, study guides for school audiences, student workshops, backstage tours, free tickets for disadvantaged families, and residency activities in schools.

- Have new organizations attracted new segments of community to MAC?

While the response to this question is anecdotal, there is no question that a certain percentage of audiences coming to performances by groups will be new, given the families and circles of influence of a new group of performers. We believe Phoenix Opera has brought some new audiences, as we have not previously offered opera on any regular basis. We've also had a couple of contemporary theater companies that we feel sure have attracted some new audiences. We could do some data mining to get more details, but the Box Office is so swamped during this time that I don't want to ask for that right now. However, we will try to research the statistics during a slower time of the year.

- Has the new audience returned to MAC for other events?

Again, we do not know that, and will try to get more data in the future. When people buy with cash just before an event, we aren't always able to capture their info, so any statistics will not be complete, but could give us a more complete idea of the impact. However, we are seeing consistent increases in participation every year, and we believe the CEF has been one of many beneficial factors. Most importantly, the awards assist companies in being

able to afford to produce events in our facilities and help ensure that a varied program of offerings from Arizona-based ensembles are available to Mesa citizens.

Any negative effects from increasing funding?

We cannot think of any negative effects of increasing funding, as long as the City Council was willing to reduce the revenue expectations for our Event Services (rentals), as this is how the CEF dollars are allocated (in other words, it is not cash, but a lowering of the amount of income we are expected to generate from rentals).

--Questions regarding Recommended Increase in Funding:

- Percentage rather than specific amount?

Not certain what this means—requires clarification from Peggy.

- Base on appropriate MAC revenue indicator from prior year

I'm not sure how MAC revenues impact this decision. MAC revenue is used to offset the expense to the General Fund of MAC programs and the operating costs for the facility.

- Recommended percentage derived using \$25,000 and 2011 base indicator.

Not certain what this means—requires clarification from Peggy.